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The POWER of Laughter

How to be Happier, Healthier and Have More Fun

By John Williams © 2005

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Please Read This First

This book is intended to amuse and entertain mature people. Nothing has been included with the intention to shock, upset or offend and there is no overt sexual content. Some jokes may include situations and/or words from common experience that some people might not approve of.

Remember, it is all fiction and only for amusement.

I believe that most readers will enjoy the stories and jokes in their context. It would be more unfair if adults' reading was restricted except by their choice.

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Introduction

This book will not make you the next big star on the professional comedy circuit.

This book will help you add some sparks to your social and business encounters with:

- Jokes for you to use along with a few you'll probably avoid in future
- a guide about how and where to use them and
- advice about when and where NOT to use them!

I can't remember seeing anything about that last bit in all of the joke-related material that I've read, or at least skimmed over, in the last several years.

I've put together some great jokes and stunts along with the best tips and short-cuts from my own experience and research. I hope that you'll find the guide part as interesting as the jokes because jokes are like bullets – power-packed but with a potential to harm. So it's critical to aim them as accurately as possible to hit the target dead-center and use the right one for each occasion.

While anyone can tell a joke and maybe get a good reaction, some of us spend years learning the best ways to do it. The advantages you'll have after reading this ebook include:

- ✓ You learned some great jokes and stunts. Okay, they aren't all new - some are so old that most readers will not have had close contact with them! All of the jokes have been auditioned - they earned their appearance in this book by getting genuine laughter from my friends, colleagues and audiences.
- ✓ You get some little-known twists and additions that I (along with some of my professional colleagues) have thought up to improve the effectiveness of many of the jokes.

- √ Adding humor to your life and your outlook will probably improve your general well-being. The restorative power of humor is now widely documented in serious medical journals. Sorry, you can't (so far) get this book on a Government subsidized prescription.
- √ You'll have all you need to make a lot of people smile every day for years except for experience. That experience is the only way to get the polish which makes your jokes shine but this is the most enjoyable kind of training you ever take on!

You'll even know how to compile some jokes of your own and the best ways to 'twist' jokes that you already know or collect in the future to make them more effective whenever and wherever you use them.

If you are in a situation where you think that you might find that you can get a better effect by changing or ignoring some of the tips I've collected here, go for it. These are guidelines based on experience but there's never just one way to get to a destination.

I'd be grateful to hear your experiences through my Magic site <http://www.ezymagic.com/>

We NEED Humor

In our day to day reality, we rarely have to face the sort of dramatic situations that I mention in 'High Power Humor' but, from the moment we open our daily newspaper or tune in the radio or television to a news broadcast, we are inundated with bad news. It's right in our faces in 3D – that's death, disaster and destruction!

Whatever business we're in, there's probably more competition, stress and increased demands to improve productivity, lower costs and do it all faster than ever before.

More families are falling apart or under heavy pressure from social, health and financial problems now than in past years.

Humor will not fix everything for us but you might be surprised at the difference a little, appropriate humor can make.

This book concentrates on smoothing social interaction and improving our social skills but humor has power far more significant than you may realize.

Many people cannot help but let themselves be seriously affected by these day-to-day pressures on us.

That's why, according to the psychologists and all the other –ists that research this area, comedy programs and live performances are among the most popular in every country where comedy is allowed.

And you'll find, if you haven't already noticed, that anyone who can bring some light-hearted fun to a group, whether it's social or business, is on the fast track to popularity.

You CAN Tell a Joke Well

You may believe you are naturally funny and get an overwhelming response to any joke that you punch out.

But, many otherwise happy people feel that they can't tell a joke well or, at least, may never get the response that they see their more extroverted friends get.

I'm the best example that I can offer to change that view. I've got the appearance of an accountant that's overdosed on vinegar but I've been getting laughs from friends, colleagues and audiences for years. And I help a wide variety of people in my workshops to do the same.

Even if you were aiming to be a professional comedian – and that's **not** the focus of this book - there's no statutory requirement that you must fit a particular - no 'comedian' stereotype – your appearance, age, religion, race or gender will not be the deciding factors in the level of success that you achieve. Just think of the wide variety of people that are currently putting bread, and probably caviar (if they like fish), on their table by performing comedy.

Okay, your age might be a problem if you're too young to get into the venues where you want to work, or you're not fit enough for the rigors of travel, performing and handling the business side of your work – it isn't all fun!

But even that doesn't apply if your focus is to just use some jokes on social and appropriate business occasions.

The single most important factor in successfully making humor part of your social profile is to use humor that fits Y*O*U - carefully select the best and most appropriate material for the occasion, the audience and your own personality.

Yes, we all have one - a personality - and it's much easier and more effective to choose and use only the jokes which fit us rather than try to change ourselves like a chameleon to put over each joke that we want to use.

I don't know what humor is and that question is really not worth pursuing - unless, perhaps, you can get a large pile of Government grant money for the project. P.G. Wodehouse, author of the classic Jeeves stories said, "I cannot define **humour** (he was British), but I think I know it when I see it."

Rather than analyze it to death, just concentrate on finding some jokes you think are funny and appropriate, run through them in your mind and then **use them**. Like riding a motorbike or doing a magic trick, telling jokes needs practice in real life situations.

Speak at Normal Pace.

Sometimes inexperienced speakers will adopt odd mannerisms when they tell a joke. More common and just as off-putting is the tendency to speed through the joke – either because they want to get to the punch-line, or just get the joke over and get away from being the center of everybody's attention.

When you realize that:

- The punch-line, however great, will not be very effective unless you give your friends enough detail and time to appreciate the whole story and
- Your friends and colleagues really want to hear your story and you'll all enjoy the experience most if you speak at about your normal pace.

... that's when you'll start to get the best response to your jokes.

Laugh at Nerves

If you feel like your throat is tightening up or you get a few butterflies (or even buffaloes) roaming the pit of your stomach when you try to tell a joke, that same feeling is probably limiting you speaking up for yourself in other circumstances.

- Asking someone to go out with you
- Talking to the cop that wants to write you a speeding ticket
- Asking the Bank Manager for a Loan
- Asking the Boss for a day off.

So, let's try and help you in this situation and you'll probably find those other occasions a bit less daunting too.

When I started learning to do Magic tricks, I went through almost terminal bouts of the butterflies. I got over them before I did my first public show. I never got any sympathy –

which is okay. Sympathy is what people offer when they can't or won't give any practical help!

Here are the best tips I can offer you:

Learn your material thoroughly. You stop most of the buffaloes in their tracks if you have your words and actions, if any, laid out. Then you can just concentrate on making sure that you and your friends enjoy your story.

Take some deep breaths. Many people don't use half their lung capacity and force their bodies to get along with less oxygen that they should. I had this problem when I started twisting balloons. That changed, after some months of regular exercise.

Realize that you're with friends and not much happens if the joke bombs. They're not going to shoot you and you'll soon get a chance to show them you can do better.

Jokes and Stories

In most social and business situations, you'll just use short jokes. That's easier for you anyway. Sometimes, you'll find a story that's a bit longer but you're sure it will go well for you. Don't throw it away but use it only after you've had time to prepare it.

Silly Seasoning

I knew one fellow who was always spraying some(not very good) jokes around. One evening, as he and his wife were getting ready to go to a friend's house, his wife said, "George, if the party is dull, then promise me that you'll just let it stay that way!"

Few professional comedians enjoy being asked to, "Tell us a joke" at inconvenient times. They have families, friends – lives! The comedy that they do is their work and they have as much right to leave their work 'at the office' as anyone else.

Some amateur comedians, however, are always pumping out the jokes instead of just using the power of humor to add sparkling highlights to their social and business encounters.

You will ensure the best response to your jokes if you use them sparingly, like a powerful flavoring rather throwing them over everything and everyone like a six-year-old child going crazy with the sauce bottle.

Leave Them Laughing

After you saw a great movie or live performance, you might have said, "I could have watched that all night!" That's a nice compliment but, if the story or performance had really kept going for another hour, it might have started to bore you. You would definitely not need another couple of hours of the same thing any time soon.

When you tell one or two jokes to your friends or colleagues, leave them (hopefully) wanting more. You're not only encouraging them to look forward to stories that you have for them in the future, but you create a better impression by letting someone else have their turn.

Risqué Jokes

Will audiences laugh at jokes with strong sexual content?

There's just 2 questions for you about sexual oriented material:

1. Am I sure that the whole group will accept this type of material without offense?

People's views about these sort of jokes range from "totally unacceptable" to "have you got any more?!" I'll leave you to decide what fits with you and your friends.

You'll probably realize that it's become very dangerous to use any of this material in a work environment – you might get sued or even fired!

A tactic to avoid completely is to apologize that the story you're about to tell 'might offend some of you' and then launch into the smut joke.

Your friends that are uncomfortable about the content will probably keep quiet in order to maintain the general friendly atmosphere. But the basic question is, "they're your friends – why would you want to make any of them feel uncomfortable?"

If one person is genuinely offended by a joke that you tell, then I believe that the joke has failed. The effect will not stop with that person because some people in the group will be more strongly attracted to them than you and are also likely to feel some discomfort at the effect your story had on their close friend.

I'm not saying that you should never use that sort of material. That's entirely your choice and all I'm doing is to make sure that you know the potential consequences.

I know that we can't please everybody – that sometime we might inadvertently offend someone because their views are at the extreme end of some topic – the end farthest from our own. We do have a right to speak out about our views, tell any joke that we feel is genuinely funny – otherwise it will fast become a dull, grey existence for us all.

There's one other important factor to consider when you find that great story, even if your friends are likely to not only love it but to have stronger ones of their own.

Can you 'sell' this sort of material? You need to be very good or, sometimes, just very brave to make them work.

Insults and Put-downs

What about jokes and stories which disparage individuals or groups?

There are a few professionals that still use an abrasive style, insult particular groups, members of their audiences or even their entire audience! They have focused their whole presentation, polished their material and possibly even suffered a few beatings before they've found their feet and audiences that appreciate their views and their venom.

I doubt that you've got the time or skill for that road and, if you do try it with friends and colleagues, you may well find yourself running out of both before you perfect your approach.

There was a lot of this sort of humor about until fairly recently. In some places, you were expected to accept supposedly good-natured disparagement of your race, religion, sexual preference or whatever as part of daily co-existence in your working life.

People often only laughed at those jokes because they wanted to fit in with the group and that was the way to do it. Some people still do for that same reason.

But the effect is likely to be more negative than positive. The world has changed – there's organizations monitoring it and even laws against it in many areas. But there's still lots of people that use this sort of joke with varying effect.

My view is that you need to be very sure that there is no unintended hurt caused by anything that you say – even a joke about, say, a couple often squabbling might offend and even hurt if you direct it at a particular couple without knowing, until later, that they are having problems.

Your quip about someone being very short might be no more than a quick line to you while they may feel very differently. In this fast-paced, high-pressure environment that's common in our workplaces these days, a little humor can be a wonderful tonic but anything that reflects on the performance of particular people or groups might not be seen by them as just a friendly joke.

Aim at Yourself

There's just one person that is 'fair game' – to be the target of your pot-shots and the butt of your banter.

That's **you**.

Remember the Point!

The worst mistake that you can make with any joke is to carefully build up your friends' anticipation with a great lead-in and then stumble because you forget the punch-line.

You probably check for your wallet, or purse, and your car-keys just before you go to work each morning. It's just as important to always check that you know the punch-line and exactly how you will say it just before you start to tell a story.

Never Explain the Joke

The finish (punch-line) to your joke should be short and clear. If you think your friends or colleagues don't get it, then just forget it. Explaining it won't help – it will get in the way of the general conversation.

Keep it Simple

Good jokes often have a surprise element or some sort of twist but, apart from that, you should keep everything simple so that your friends can easily follow the story and the finish is crystal clear.

Just Use Email for Messages

In a formal presentation, many speakers will use stories to emphasize a point that they want their audience to think about or act on. This takes some careful setting up so that the story and the message are both acceptable to the listeners.

When you're with your friends or colleagues, stick to funny jokes without trying to be subtle and add other content.

If you want to give them a message – send them an email.

Keep it Short

There are one-line jokes, paragraph-length jokes and jokes where the finale is funny enough that it can be worth spending up to a couple of minutes giving the build-up. Give each joke or story the amount of detail it needs but no more.

For instance, you might be telling your friends about a carpet salesman, and go into some detail about the carpet that's the focus of your story but they will become confused and less responsive if you add too many details.

Laughing at Your Own Joke.

Some people try to emphasize how funny their story is by laughing themselves while they are telling it. That will almost always backfire. Let the audience decide how funny the joke is, and then you can join in.

This is especially important if you are describing a situation where you (or the person in your story) was not feeling funny at the time. If you say, "I was breathing flames", and

you're laughing at the same time – that probably won't have the impact that you'd get if you demonstrate how you looked and sounded – until you deliver the punch-line of the joke.

The Wrong Joke or the Wrong Audience

In a business situation, telling some jokes might affect which opportunities you might be offered in the future; “He offended Freddy with that story about _____ the other day. Let’s send someone that’s a bit more diplomatic to that conference.”

The best guide is to try to put yourself in the place of the person that might feel that the story focuses on them, their race or other grouping. Would you genuinely laugh if it was aimed at you?

Because there are so many great stories around and it’s usually easy to find a suitable substitute of equal effectiveness, when in doubt – leave it out.

Keep Niche Jokes for Niche People

I know some good jokes about computers and the people that use them but they are probably the least used jokes in my files. I think they’re as funny, for the right audience, as any of the other jokes that I use but people generally regard computers as **just not funny**. They may have problems when they use computers or dealing with people that are supposed to help them get the best use from them.

If you are an enthusiast about any subject that the average person is not likely to have much knowledge or enthusiasm for, then keep related jokes for those times when you are talking with other enthusiasts.

Telling In-Jokes.

People will appreciate your joke or story most if it’s relates to the topic you’re discussing or a subject that they are all interested in.

But avoid using words in a story that might only be understood by part of your audience. And that goes double for abbreviations.

Talking Over Children’s Heads.

This is a really bad sub-section of the in-joke problem.

The teller assumes that the children won't understand the (usually sexual) meaning of what he (usually he) said. Too bad if everyone finds out he was wrong because there's no way back.

And this can also have a delayed, very negative effect. Children are not only more knowledgeable than we might realize but they have good memories and excellent hearing. They might, in all innocence, ask someone that was not present what those words meant at a later time to someone who doesn't see the funny side, if any, of using that sort of material when there are children present.

Be a Good Audience

You will get a great feeling when you find that your jokes are starting to get a warm reception. Remember that your friends deserve their turn as the center of attention so **be a good audience** for them and don't blurt out the punch-line of other people's jokes or try to bring the focus back your way by always jumping with a story of your own after they finish.

Be considerate and appreciative of them. Then, you'll have plenty of other opportunities and willing listeners in the future.

Steal From the Best

Is it fair to use other people's jokes and stories?

It's a very bad, even dangerous idea if you're a professional comedian and you steal other pro's original material - especially the bits of business (gestures and actions) they use between the jokes. Jokes can be got anywhere but good business is like gold dust.

But you can use small bits of that material just to amuse your friends and colleagues unless you just found out they're booked to see that performer in the next couple of weeks. You probably won't spoil their enjoyment of the act but their opinion of your own presentation will certainly suffer!

Whatever material you use, please never use anything until you've molded it to suit you.

Being Natural ... Takes Practice

Even if you have an inborn ability to connect with people and find that your jokes are almost always well received, you'll improve the response by practicing every line you use, including the seeming impromptu remarks as well as the longer stories.

After all, many professional musicians that may have heaps of natural ability still rehearse almost every day. Comedians, magicians, singers that may have used the same material many, many times will keep working on their material so that it's doesn't seem 'canned' to the spectators.

The Way You tell Them

Timing

The secret of great joke delivery is timing. Watch tapes of the old Masters like Jack Benny, Bob Hope and the best of the modern comedians – pacing their delivery and, especially, the pauses bring the greatest laughs.

Sorry, I can't teach you the art of timing and the only way that I know for you to improve your grasp of that technique is to work at it, record your delivery as often as you can, leave it for at least a day and then listen. That will help but it's the constant work that polishes everything.

When people use a joke that someone such as Bob Hope used, they can learn the words, even when to raise or lower their voice, but they probably won't get the sort of reaction they expect. They aren't Bob Hope so their best strategy is to be the most appealing version of themselves that they can be rather than a pale imitation of anyone else.

I suggest you hire some videos or DVD's of comedians such as Bob Hope, Lucille Ball, Jack Benny and Red Skelton, even if you feel your personal style is more like, say, Bobcat Goldthwait.

While you're watching the jokes and all the little moves, gestures and bits of business, you will start to understand how these people made contact with the hearts as well as the eyes of their audiences.

That understanding could prove invaluable to almost anyone, whatever sort of work you do.

Your Biggest Asset

You've got one advantage over everyone else and it's important that you share that with the people that you tell your jokes.

It's you - your unique background and experiences. That's what your friends like and your colleagues are, at least, comfortable with.

Follow the lead of the professionals who ruthlessly reject any joke, however funny, that does not fit the image which their public has of them.

Sometimes, we don't appreciate our natural assets. I remember a clerk who was an accomplished amateur magician. He was from China and I suggested that he capitalize on that to give himself a unique selling point with the major entertainment venues.

He didn't want to do that, preferring to appear in a regular Western dinner suit. He got a great response anyway.

When a Circus came here, he was asked to audition for them and they were keen to hire him at, I believe, with a very good rate of pay. They made just one condition – he had to wear an oriental costume. He did it their way and was very well received. But that was the last time he performed in costume.

You should not try to hide an accent or even anything that you (or others) might perceive as a fault. One gentleman ended his first stage presentation with this line, "I am a living example that you don't need to be handsome, tall or speak good English to succeed in this business." He also proved that the lack of those "qualities" didn't stop you making a successful presentation – the audience gave him a standing ovation and this was in Australia where standing ovations for **any** presentation are very unusual.

Impressions and Accents

Many people think that they can, without practice or preparation, tell jokes much better than they really can. An even bigger group think that they are natural mimics that can give a funny but recognizable impression of some movie star or, at least, imitate the accents of people from other countries and regions.

Mostly, they're very wrong. Part of the problem is that we don't hear our voice as other people do. We might hear ourselves speaking in a rich melodious baritone where others might compare us to a walrus with a sore throat.

Have you ever heard your own voice as others hear it? It surprises many people who know how they sound through their own ears when speaking that there can be a great difference in what we hear compared to how we sound to other people.

Our voice is conveyed through and altered by the bones of our head!

The first time that you hear a recording of your own voice may be a real shock! It's worth doing as soon as possible, but please understand that, while it may sound bad to you on the first time you hear a recording, there's no need for panic. Your voice has been getting you through life pretty well up to this point and any negative effect you feel is probably only because it sounds different to what you expected.

If you decide that you really do need to improve some aspects of the way that you sound, approach it one small step at a time. Just pick what seems the part that you most need to work on and take it slowly.

Your colleagues and, especially, your friends and family like you the way that you are so don't upset them by trying to make too much of a change too quickly.

If you speak more slowly than many of the people that you mix with, some might think that you also think more slowly. Don't worry because that can be more of an advantage than a hindrance. Leave your voice alone and let your actions speak for you.

If you may have to talk to social, community or work-related groups, you can get plenty of tips about that area in my book, 'Say a Few Words', which is available from the Ebookwholesaler Member that supplied this book to you.

When Your Joke Bombs

If you ride a motorbike, you will probably have a spill sometime.

If you kiss people, you might get their cold

If you use computers ... let's not go there – it could get too depressing.

If you tell jokes, some will fall flat.

All these activities have enough positive benefits (even computers) to make it worthwhile to accept the spills, colds, spam and dud audiences.

No, that's my joke! The audience is NEVER the reason that a joke falls flat – it's almost always something to do with that person that stares back at you from the bathroom mirror.

No-one can guarantee no flops – look at the news stories from Hollywood about movies that cost millions of dollars and the theatres make more profit from the popcorn concession than ticket sales. The studios have extensive data going back years, spend big on research, test films in multiple previews and still end up with some clunkers.

So, I'm afraid that you and I will not always get the reaction we want. But that's okay, so long as we know how to handle it.

The best way is not to show any deep reaction and get back up on that horse ... I mean, tell a sure-fire joke or let someone else carry the conversation away from the 'scene of the crime'. If you opt for the latter, continue to take part in the conversation so that your friends don't think that you can't handle a minor setback like that.

Most important, be appreciative of others' jokes and wipe the occasional hiccups from your mind.

Golden Jokes

The more jokes that you tell, the quicker you will start to collect what are called Golden Jokes – they're jokes that always work for you.

You may not need them very often but it's a great feeling, just like finding a real gold nugget when you hear the extra level of appreciation from your friends that announce your last story was Golden!

Polish and Practice

Someone like the late Bob Hope could look at a joke that had been carefully prepared and written out for him, then say almost immediately if it was one that would work if he used it. That was because of his natural talent and years of experience.

Although I've used, written and read hundreds of jokes, I sometimes need to try them out – at least run through them privately but out loud - before I can get a good idea of whether a story is one that will work for me.

That's because a joke that is written to be spoken will be phrased differently to a joke that is designed to make you laugh when you read it.

When you start looking for jokes that you can use in this ebook or any other collection, think not just of the words as they are written but take some time – think how you might re-work the joke, change the setting or the type of person in the story perhaps to better fit with the group that you are going to tell the story to.

Remembering People

If you always remember people's names and use them, that will be a great boost for your jokes and every other aspect of your social and business life.

I'll give you just a couple of quick pointers here, and then tell you about the most useful resource for improving your memory at the end of this section ... if I remember!

When we are introduced to someone, whether it's a business or social contact, there are many things that compete for our attention. But, giving the new friend or colleague a couple of valuable minutes right then will pay off handsomely simply because so few of us do it.

After someone tells you the new person's name and probably a few other details about them, make sure that you focus strongly on the new arrival and say something to them which includes their name. That will help to reinforce the stickiness of that most important fact in your brain. If you aren't sure that you got their name clearly, ask for it again – even ask them to spell it. They will appreciate your interest unless, as happened to a colleague of mine, their name is J.O.E.. S.M.I.T.H. which just showed that my friend had not really been listening the first time.

Now, you mentally associate something about that person with an image that is easy for you to remember – picture Mr. Sampson pushing down the pillars of the temple (Samson's near enough for a mental image!) or Elizabeth with crown and scepter (if you've got a British background). Silly pictures are best – they tend to 'stick' better and no-one else will ever know about them.

Just concentrate on that image while looking at that person for a few seconds. It's a simple, quick technique and surprisingly effective.

Use the system every day and your retention of names and faces will improve quickly. Soon, it will be automatic.

Oh, the resource for more memory improvement information? I recommend any of the books and courses by Harry Lorayne. His first book on the subject, 'How to Develop a Super Power Memory' is the basis for most of the more modern stuff that he and other memory experts have produced. If you get that (and, yes, it's still in print) and do the exercises, that's probably all you will ever need.

Stunts

You can spread around a lot of fun with simple stunts and gimmicks. I have an online magic shop at <http://www.ezymagic.com/aladdin/> but this is not an attempt to get you to buy something there.

The sort of thing that I'm talking about are not professional magic tricks but simple gimmicks that you can buy from any joke shop or even put together yourself from things around your home.

You could find it well worthwhile to spend a couple of dollars at the novelty store. Many of the cheapest 'slum' magic are copies of classic tricks that continue to amuse and intrigue people. I don't recommend that you inflict the cheap plastic magic gimmicks on your friends. Buy them to see how they work, pick out one or two that appeal to you and make your own version in more durable and less flashy materials.

Then you can pass the cheap plastic versions on to a favorite niece or nephew or perhaps your girlfriend's pesky little brother.

But, leave the practical jokes in the shop. They are so popular that more than one fortune has been made from their production and distribution but they don't have any place in a business or any adult social occasion.

Cracker Surprise

For this 'miracle', you just need a powdery or flaky biscuit, cookie or cracker, not too large. If the local variety is large, break off a piece that is slightly smaller than the palm of your hand.

Show everyone the biscuit, then pretend to put it in your other hand and quickly close the fingers of that hand in to a fist.

Now, raise the other hand that secretly holds the biscuit over your clenched fist and wave it in a circular motion around the fist. As you do that, you say, "I'll spread some Magic

Woofle dust on to the biscuit' and you crush the biscuit in your upper hand so that the flakes float down on to your fist.

Now, you open your fist to show your friends that the biscuit has disappeared! Of course, everybody will quickly realize what happened to the biscuit but you will get a good laugh.

Sawing A Lady – Stage I

Say that you are planning to saw a woman in half later this year but you're starting off small because of budget difficulties (and the fact that the women you know are too smart to let you near them, especially with a 6 foot cross-cut saw!)

You show your friends a paper straw and a piece of string. You also display a pair of scissors.

Hold the straw upright and drop one end of the string down through the straw. Make sure that the ends of the string are poking out of the ends of the straw.

Bend the straw in half, then pick up the scissors and cut through the bend in the straw – straight through, no tricks (well, almost none).

Hand the scissors to one of your friends, preferably a woman if you're a man and vice-versa.

Put the cut straw in the hand that had held the scissors and form a fist with that hand. Make sure that one end of the string is still seen poking out the side of that hand. Ask the woman with the scissors to wave them around your hand as if they were a magic wand.

Then, you ask her to pull on the end of the string that pokes out of the side of your closed fist. She pulls it free and everyone can see that the string is back in one piece – the same length as before.

METHOD: The cracker trick is a parody of a regular Magic trick but this is a very easy trick that gets a great reaction. You still play it for laughs though – and gasps of amazement are just a bonus!

All you need are the string, straw, scissors and a sharp blade (such as a utility knife).

Cut a half inch slit right at the center of the straw. Bend the straw in half, so that the bend is at the bottom, the slit is uppermost and in between the two halves of the straw.

I always use white or clear glue, depending on the color of the string, to fix the ends of the string and prevent them fraying – they would look shabby if you let them do that.

Straighten out the straw, ensuring that the slit is not obvious, then put the string, straw and scissors in your jacket pocket or purse.

PERFORMANCE: Show the straw and other bits, then hand someone the scissors.

Feed the string through the straw, then bend it up as you did before during your preparation. You can actually display both sides of the straw at this point because the string is still inside the straw and the slit should not be visible.

Now, you pull the two ends of the sting upward. That will bring the center of the string out of the slit in the straw but your hand, which is holding the straw, makes it impossible for your friends to see this.

Get back the scissors and cut through the straw. If you're using the average blunt kitchen scissors or if you want to continue the story about cutting someone in half later on, saw the scissor blade across the straw a couple of times before your cut through it.

The mechanical part of the trick is over and you can concentrate on making the restoration of the string as much fun as possible for your friends and yourself.

Writing and 'Twisting' Jokes

With all the jokes available from books like this, why would you want to use your time to write some of your own stuff?

- ✓ Your friends and colleagues will appreciate any effort that you put into fitting the stories you tell as closely as possible to the interests of the group you're with.
- ✓ It's great mental exercise
- ✓ It's a lot cheaper than a 'mind-power' seminar.

This is a great way to make use of time that you have to spend when you don't need to concentrate on your current environment and activity:

- ✓ in a traffic jam,
- ✓ in a supermarket queue,
- ✓ at the Laundromat
- ✓ at a political meeting
- ✓ walking the dog or
- ✓ while you're watching your wife/husband's favorite movie or television program.
Just make sure you don't burst out laughing at the really sad bits!

Another method for finding good lines and even full stories is to look out for them. You may have heard of people that spent years in misery because of poor finances and yet they had undiscovered or under-utilized assets within easy reach that they couldn't see because their eyes and their mental focus was on their problems, not possible solutions.

When you start to open your mind to look out for funny things that you hear people say, you'll probably be surprised how quickly you can fill at least a couple of pages of your new notebook.

Consciously hunting after the gems of laughter that crop up in daily life has a side benefit of helping to tune our mind to be more receptive to positive input and be less affected by negativity. That's good for our health as well as our interaction with other people.

If you haven't got a notebook, please get one. Many people that start writing down little snippets will limit their searches to television shows or movies but those jokes are likely to be well-known to your friends and I can assure you that real life can be much funnier at times.

If you have a website, you can use the amusing material that you find as entries in your blog. A blog is a web diary – the idea has been around for years but has become much more popular recently. Your personal blog is a great way to let friends and relatives know what you are up to without writing individual letters, You can also use the blog format to promoting your business and frequent new material is the best way to encourage people to return to your site. Search engines love blogs and even the off-line media are reporting about the promotional power of a good blog, especially since several blog writers were given media accreditation for the 2004 Democrat Convention in the U.S.A.

If this is something you think worth looking in to, check out my recent book, 'Blog Biz for Beginners' which you can get from the Ebookwholesaler Member that supplied this book to you.

I don't write many jokes myself (probably just as well) but I always try to tailor those which I use to the intended audience. I'll update a radio to a wide screen television or transpose it from the American Mid-West to Kalgoorlie if it seems a better fit.

I can only think of one that I can lay claim to – well, no-one else has thought enough of it to bother saying it was theirs anyway.

One evening, I thanked a friend for inviting me to dinner. I said that I had cooked an amulet for my breakfast.

“An amulet? Don’t you mean omelet?” she asked.

“Well, it was supposed to be an omelet ... but they always turn out hard and round when I cook them!”

Not great, but that gets a good reaction each time that I use it.

Here are a few tips to help you if you want to make up your own jokes or freshen up some that you know.

First thing to understand is that there are no new jokes (no, not even omelet/amulet probably!) But it’s very important to realize that doesn’t give you an excuse or right to use other people’s material and claim it as your own origination. Most of us store jokes that we might use in a “swipe” file but we know better than to use it without adapting it to fit our own characteristics.

Trying to get a laugh with some joke that was used on a popular television program will probably fail. Trying to claim those jokes as your own is guaranteed to fail!

The simplest way to find material to add to your files is to watch for material in cartoons, news stories or funny things that you hear in the course of your day. Nothing is stranger or much funnier than real life.

Newspapers and magazines regularly use reports of strange happenings and outlandish behavior to fill small gaps at the end of their major stories. Adapt them to a joke format that suits you.

The best advice I was given about what sort of jokes to use was, “Something that your friends will instantly relate to. Make sure there’s a surprise twist if at all possible and don’t put the ending too far from the beginning.

The Jokes ... at Last!

Jokes are like an artist's blank canvas. You can color them (even blue if that's what you decide to do!), change the locations and also the gender or any other characteristic of the people, animals and aliens in the story.

With experience, you may also change one-liners into stories or reduce stories to a few powerful words.

I've categorized the jokes in to fairly broad divisions – you may want to make your own (swipe) file (just for your personal use) with the jokes you likely most, arranged in the way which is most convenient for you.

I hope that you get as much enjoyment from reading and, especially using this material as I have in sorting and compiling them for you.

Your feedback is always welcome at <http://www.ezymagic.com/>

Animals

Matt saw the Zoo-keeper was upset, so he asked, "What's wrong?"

The keeper said, "The elephant died!"

Matt asked, "Was that a special favorite of yours?"

The keeper said, "That's not it. The boss says that I've got to dig the grave!"

Koalas

An elderly tourist couple got off the regular tourist trail in Australia and arrived at a small town just on lunch time.

There was only one shop in the main street – actually the only shop in the town. It was next to a small zoo where they could see various small marsupial animals. The shop and the zoo shared a sign, "Mercy's".

They stopped their car and went in. The large lady behind the counter said, “dp you want something to eat? These are our specialties.”

She handed them a Menu.

Wallaby stew \$5

Platypus patties \$4.75

Koala Tea \$5.50 per cup

They asked, “What’s this tea?”

Mercy said, “It’s my own recipe – very refreshing”.

They each ordered some stew and a cup of her special (and expensive) tea.

The food was delicious and the tea, while it had a very unusual flavor, was very invigorating.

Then the lady noticed tiny bits of gray fur in her tea.

She said, “I want to finish my tea but could you strain it for me first, please.”

The shopkeeper sniffed loudly and said, “The Koala Tea of Mercy is NOT strained!”

Birds

* With burglaries on the rise, I checked the price of a watchdog. Far too dear!

But it’s okay – I taught my parrot to bark!

* Two pelicans were chatting.

One said to the other, enviously, “That’s a big fish you have.”

The other pelican replied, "Well, it fills the bill."

Authority

* Alfred told his friend Bert, "I've been appointed the State's Chief Censor."

Bert said, "Why do we need a Censor?"

Alfred replied, "Prolonged exposure to filth and depravity causes irreparable damage to people and they become a threat to society."

"How long is your appointment?"

Alfred said, "Four years"

Bert asked, "What do they do with you then, shoot you or just lock you up and throw away the key?"

Law

* A woman rushed up to a cop last evening. She said, "Officer, there's a man following me and I think he's drunk!"

The cop looked at her carefully and then replied, "Lady, I think you're right – he must be!"

* A policeman was almost ready to drive his police car back to the station when he saw a small car coming toward him. It was battered and probably held together by the vast number of pro-environment stickers that were stuck to it. The sole occupant was a sweet looking elderly woman and the policeman smiled at her as the cars came closer. He was surprised when she looked at him and screamed, "**PIG!**" through the open window.

He was going to turn the police car and catch up with her but realized there was no future in that because of her age and, anyway, it was nearly the end of his shift. But he was very

angry, cursing quietly – okay, maybe not so quietly, as he turned the next corner and smashed into a dead boar in the middle of the road!

* The desk sergeant at the local police station lifted the phone about 11pm the other night and heard a frightened woman say, "There's someone prowling around our back yard!"

The sergeant said, "Give me your address and we'll get a patrol car to check it out?"

There was a short pause and the sound of some whispers at the other end of the phone, then the lady replied, "No, thank you. My husband said we should not get involved."

Royalty

* What is the difference between Prince Charles (Prince of Wales), a bald man and a female monkey?

The Prince is the **Heir Apparent**, a bald man has **no hair apparent** and the monkey is a **hairy parent!**

Taxes

* The government calls the Tax system 'revenue sharing'. I finally figured out how it works. If you revenue shared with your girlfriend that way, you could give her a \$3,000 necklace and you'd only get a handshake.

* The IRS sold up all my stuff because of back taxes. They let me keep a picture of my wife and kids. They said that I can actually have them back when I've made 4 more payments.

Business

* **An Ounce of Future is Worth More than a Pound of Past**

* Things are not looking good – sales are down 15% and sales meetings are up 25%!

* My cousin makes dish towels and his new product line is selling as fast as he can make them – it's a set of two for the Bridal Shower market – both towels are marked **HIS!**

* Mark asked Mervyn, "How's business?"

Mervyn said, "Pretty good. We were able to put a new floor in our bathroom this year."

Mark replied, "Congratulations."

Mervyn said, "Yes, if things go really well this year, we'll be able to fix the path to it from our back door!"

* Saint Peter saw three new arrivals at the Pearly Gates.

He said everyone was treated the same there and he had to ask them each a test question.

He asked the first man, "Can you spell GOD?"

The lawyer spelled it carefully and correctly, so he was allowed in.

St Peter asked the second man, "Can you spell HAPPY?"

The pawnbroker spelled it correctly, so he was allowed in.

Then St Peter turned to the woman and asked, "Can you spell CZECHOSLOVAKIA?"

* Minnie said, "Albert, how's your new franchise?"

Albert replied, "They keep telling me it's a goldmine but I think that all I've got so far is the shaft!"

Bosses

* Our boss called all of us to a special meeting yesterday. He said that he wanted us all to know that he didn't want yes-men on his staff.

He said," I want you to speak up anytime that you disagree with me, even if it costs you your job!"

* Our Boss gave up smoking in the New Year and it's a wonder he hasn't developed an ulcer – he's given them to 3 of his staff since then!

* My boss is a forthright bloke – he gets something right about a quarter of the time!

* My boss told the reporter, "To ensure your success in business, you need Honesty and Wisdom."

The reporter asked, "Can you give me an example of each, please?"

The boss said, "Honesty - always keep your promises."

The reporter said, "And Wisdom?"

Our boss replied, "Never put your promises in writing."

* The optometrist's son, Ben, got his qualification and joined his father's business. He was popular with the customers but his sales figures were disappointing.

His father said, "Ben, they seem to teach you all the latest techniques for testing the patients' eyes but they don't teach you anything about business!"

"When the customer asks how much their new spectacles will be, just look them straight in the eye and say, "\$50!"

If they don't faint, then you say, "That's for the frames."

If they don't rush away, then you say, "The lenses are \$40!"

If they haven't expired at that point, you've got them!

Then you say, "EACH!"

* The optometrist's other son started an antique shop. He asked his Dad, "How should I price my stock."

The old guy said, "The older the item, the more modern the price!"

* The visitor asked, "How long have you worked here?"

Chris said, "Since the boss threatened to fire me!"

Accountants

* The Boss was impressed with the speed and efficiency that the new pay-clerk showed in sorting the wages into the envelopes.

He asked, "Where did you learn to do that so fast"

The clerk said, "When I was at Yale."

The boss said, "That's very good. By the way, what's your name?"

The clerk replied, "Alf Yackson."

Computers

Daisy worked as a clerk at the Pentagon. One day, she became very excited and rang the technical support section.

“She said, “I think someone’s trying to break in to my computer.’

The technician said, “That’s very serious. Can you give me more information, please?”

“Well,” said Daisy, “I just got a message on my screen, “General Failure trying to read Drive: C!”

Economists

*I think this joke is funny but the one accountant I told it to didn't agree (the rest of the group loved it!). Anyway, thanks to Author and Economist Dean Pilzer, here is the best joke – actually the **only** joke – I've ever heard about economists.*

* Definition of an economist – someone that’s good at Maths but doesn’t have the personality to be an Accountant.

Holidays

* Cliff asked his friend, “When are you having your holidays?”

Ralph said, “I can’t get away from work.”

Cliff said, “Can’t they get along without you?”

Ralph said, “They could and I don’t want them to realize how easily!”

Lawyers

* Guy and his wife raised their two boys and worked hard to give them every advantage they never had themselves. One became a Doctor and the other a Lawyer.

One evening, Guy was knocked down by a car and his wife, the 2 boys and their wives rushed to his side in hospital. His son, the Doctor, took over his treatment and his other son followed up on the police and legal matters.

A few days later, when Guy was conscious and recovering, the rest of the family met at his home to report progress.

The Doctor said, "He's very fit for his age and I'm sure I can have him back on his feet in 3 weeks."

The Lawyer said, "Don't be too hasty. I've talked to the driver's insurance company and, if Dad loses a leg, I can get him \$25,000!"

* A Doctor was introduced to a Lawyer at a party. The Doctor said to the Lawyer, "I'm always bothered by people asking for medical advice at parties."

The Lawyer said, "I used to have that problem too – people asking my advice. But I fixed it very simply."

The Doctor asked, "How did you do that?"

The Lawyer replied, "I just started sending them a bill the next day. It hardly ever happens now."

The Doctor was very happy – a mood that lasted until the next morning when he got the Lawyer's \$40 account for "professional advice"!

Office Hours

* The guy at the desk next to me was always absent. The boss said they'd give him a pink slip when they found someone that knew what he looked like. They fired him when he turned up to get his 10 year plaque. On the plaque, they put, "To whom it may concern."

Celebrations

* Halloween is when you find masked people at your door. There are neighborhoods in this city where Halloween is every day of the year!

* Marvin was a great crime reporter but he flopped when he was re-assigned to report on Weddings. It wasn't just the trench-coat and his habit of stabbing one finger at whoever he was questioning, a lot of couples got very upset with his five standard questions; WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and especially WHY!

* Christmas is an important and widely celebrated holiday where there is little thought for past or future, just the **present!**

* My Mother-in-law gave me a snakeskin belt for Christmas – with the snake still in it!

* I got my mother-in-law a nice chair for her birthday. The wife refuses to let me plug it in.

* I thought I'd give the wife money this year for her birthday – that couldn't be wrong. She said she appreciated the thought but wasn't very happy about the size or the color!

* I can't tell you much about last New Year's Eve – it was my wildest for years! I even got a ticket for driving with 3 people on the front seat of my brother's motorcycle!

* I really didn't mind much paying \$300 for the wife's new earrings. But I was upset when the Jeweler charged me 50 cents extra for gift wrapping!

Crime

* When they charged Vito with Murder, he pleaded insanity. He said his Exhibit A was his lawyer!

* The burglar came rushing out of the window. His accomplice said, "What did you get?"

His mate said, "Nothing – that bloke's a lawyer. I believe in professional courtesy!"

* Ed was a butcher, found guilty of selling horse meat as rabbit mince.

The Judge asked, "Do you have anything to say in mitigation?"

Ed's lawyer said, "Your Honor, my client did use a fair proportion of rabbit meat in the mince he sold."

The Judge asked, "What does your client call 'a fair proportion'?"

The lawyer said, "50%, your honor."

The prosecutor butted in, "Your honor, he actually means 1 rabbit to 1 horse!"

* Mark had worked hard at his job at the Timber Yard for 15 years. Every evening though, he usually put a plank or some other wood in his truck and took it home with him.

One day, the boss called Mark in to his office. Mark thought his thefts had been discovered and he was going to be fired but he was surprised to find the Regional Manager and all his workmates there. The Manager praised Mark for his work and presented him with a silver tray as the firm's 'Employee of the Year'!

That night mark said to his wife, "I feel awful. I've been taking wood from them all these years, built the shed and the kid's cubby house. They call me up to the office and I think they're going to fire me. Instead, they give me this tray and a raise! What should I do?"

His wife said, "You'd better go and ask our Priest."

Mark went straight to the Church and poured out the story to the Priest.

The Priest said, "Mark, you must do some penance. I think you should make a Novena*."

Mark said immediately, "Father, I've never done that but, if you've got the plans, then I've got the wood!" * *Novena – a prayer that is said for 9 days for a specific reason.*

* Ben's Lawyer said that he didn't have much choice about becoming a thief – he was just following in his Dad's fingerprints.

* Sam and Mary had been happily married for 40 years. They'd always just scraped by so there was no big celebration.

He suggested they revive some memories by visiting the old school where they first met as kids. They found it was abandoned but there were gaps in the shutters and they sneaked in.

Their classroom still had some of the desks and Sam found the one where he'd scratched Mary's name so many years ago.

Mary said, "Sam, we'd better start walking home. This night air is not good for us."

As they walked through the back streets, an armored van rushed past. Suddenly, a small door on the van swung open and a money bag dropped right at their feet! The door slammed shut and the van never even slowed.

Mary said, "Let's take it home and decide what to do with it later." But she had no intention to return the money after all their years of scraping along. When they got home, she hid it in the room their son had used until he went of to War a couple of years before.

The next morning, 2 treasury agents knocked at their door. They introduced themselves and then one asked, "Do you know anything about a bag of money?"

Mary quickly said, "Don't listen to my husband. He's not too sharp these days." She tapped the side of her head.

But Sam said, "Yes, we took the money."

One agent said, "Well sir, please tell us exactly what happened."

Sam said, "Yesterday, Mary and I were walking home from school ..."

Right then, the other agent said, "Thank you sir." He nodded to Mary and said, "You're right, we won't trouble you any more."

* The cops know when Winter is coming – the car thieves start stealing less convertibles and pinch more sedans instead.

Education

* My brother got a degree in Languages. He can't get a job with it but he said that it comes in handy for those foreign movies he watches all the time.

* He said his college football coach took a 5% salary cut during the last recession. The college was really grateful because it meant they could hire 3 more teachers.

* I got a degree in History. Of course, it was much easier back then - not much had happened!

* The teacher asked young Mike, "Please complete this sentence; 'When the going gets tough,?'"

Mike said, "I don't know – I don't walk anywhere if I can help it!"

* When he was at college, Arthur got a letter from his Mother, with all the news from home. At the bottom, she wrote, "I was going to put in \$50 for you but I've already sealed the envelope."

* The following week, Arthur got a parcel from home. His mother said, "I'm sending your favorite jacket. Your father said it was too heavy and would cost too much to send. So, I cut off the buttons and put them in the pocket."

* Shortly after he became a judge, he found his old English teacher in front of him for a traffic offense.

The teacher said, "Your Honor, I'm guilty but I hope you won't fine me because we teachers are very low paid."

The judge said, "Mr Smythe, I've got something much more appropriate. I want you to sit at the back of the Court and you mustn't leave until you've written 'I must not double park' 500 times!"

* The Professor addressed the class on the first day of the term, "If there are any rowdy fools in this group, please stand now and save us all time later."

Just one student, at the back of the room, rose.

The professor frowned at him, then said, "Are you really a noisy fool?"

The student said, "Not really but I thought you'd get lonely just standing up all by yourself!"

* The teacher told Barry's parents, "Your son has a lightning mind – occasional flashes but, otherwise, total darkness!"

* Anne woke up about 2a.m. to see Henry sitting on the side of their bed, shaking and sweating.

She asked, "Are you alright, Darling?"

Henry said through chattering teeth," Go back to sleep. I'll be okay soon. I can't help it - every now and again, I remember the 2 years I spent in that place!"

Anne asked, "The Army?"

"No," said Henry, "the third grade!"

* The teacher told the children to be careful going home because it had been snowing. She also told them to always wear warm clothing this time of year because one little boy, the previous year, went out with his sled – didn't wear a jacket, became lost and froze to death.

Little Hiram put up his hand and asked, "Miss, what happened to his sled?"

* The Principal of my old College took over as Chief Warden of the County Jail. He said one of the main reasons was that he wanted to meet more of the college graduates.

* It was my old school's big Quiz Night.

The headmaster acted as compere. He asked the last 3 contestants, "Please finish this sentence; "*Old McDonald had a what?*"

The first boy said, "*Old McDonald had a wife?*"

The compere said, "Sorry, you're eliminated."

The second boy said, "*Old McDonald had a barn?*"

The compere said, "Sorry, you're eliminated too."

The first boy said, "*Old McDonald had a farm?*"

The compere said, "Fantastic! Now, please spell it?"

The smartest boy in school smiled and then said, “**E_I_E_I_O!**”

Ethnic

I suggest that we always should think very carefully before using any story which is at the expense of any individual or group. But there are times when they will work very well, especially if the joke teller is of the group which he makes the butt of the joke. Many professional comedians use this sort of material in that way.

Or you might make up a mythical region and populate it with the characters of your stories or just leave out the specifics that point to a particular group.

Australian

* A man from Texas walked in to a small pub in the middle of the Australian outback.

He said, “What do have to eat, please?”

The barman said, “I can get the wife to cook you a kangaroo patty?”

The American said, “Yes please, that sounds great.”

After he'd eaten the meal, he said, “Thanks, how much do I owe you?”

The barman said, “That'll be \$40, thanks.”

The American was shocked, “\$40! Are they rare?”

The barman replied, “Well, not as rare as Texans out here!”

British

This story takes aim at three traditional rivals, so there's little chance that anyone will be offended;

* Three friends of mine are Alfred, Ben and Martin. Alfred is of English origin, Ben is Spanish by adoption and Martin is Scotch by absorption.

* Michael said, "Patrick, I didn't know you had a smart bicycle like that!"

Patrick said, "I was walking along a lane when this pretty blonde on a bicycle knocked me down! She was very upset, took off all her clothes and said I could have anything I wanted. So, I took her bicycle."

Michael said, "Smart move. Her clothes wouldn't have looked any good on you!"

* Enid said to the Turk, "I can't remember your name but I know your fez." He felt insulted so, as he went out, he **salaamed** the door of the shop!

* Arthur is a very proper Englishman but he surprised many of his friends when he joined a nudist club shortly after he moved to the U.S.A.

One day, the president of the Club stopped Arthur and said, "It's perfectly okay, Arthur, but I'm just wondering why you decided to wear a hat at the club today?"

Arthur said, "I've been told some English people are visiting the Club today and there might be someone I know, so I'll have to tip my hat to them, won't I?"

* English people have lots of jokes about the Scots and the Irish. They think both races are really funny. The Irish tell jokes mostly about the Scots because they say that the English are beyond a joke. The Scots tell jokes about the Irish and the English but avoid making any jokes at their own expense!

* I said to this woman that I met last night, "You're Scotch, aren't you?" She glared at me and hissed, "No, I'm a Scot, Scottish but **never** Scotch!"

"I'm sorry, but what's the difference?"

She said, "I can't be picked up in hotels!" and that was the last I saw of her.

* Martin visited his Scottish neighbor and saw Mac scraping off wallpaper.

Martin asked, "Redecorating, Mac?"

Mac replied, "No, we're moving house!"

* I worked one function where I was told that I must not make fun of the Irish but, with my experience, I had no trouble changing my script in seconds! Then, I started my first story, "There were two Arabs called Pat and Mike"

* The girl at the Carwash said, "That'll be \$5, Paddy."

Michael said, "How did you know I'm Irish?"

Well," she replied, "We don't get many motorcyclists here!"

* The Scotsman knocked on the Pearly Gates.

St Peter asked, "Who is there?"

"It's Andrew MacPherson."

St Peter shouted, "Go away, Mac – we're not going to make porridge for one!"

Friends

* He said, "Quick, give me a kiss!"

She said, "No, I've got scruples!"

He replied, "I'm not worried – I've had everything at least once!"

* Alvin asked Charles, "What's your definition of charity?"

Charles said, "Sharing with your friends that have less."

Alvin said, "So, if you had two cars, you'd give me one."

Charles said, "Sure."

Alvin said, "So, if you had two lawnmowers, you'd give me one."

Charles said, "Without another thought."

Alvin said, "So, if you had two watches, you'd give me one."

Charles said, "No!"

Alvin said, "Why not?"

Charles said, "Because I've got two watches!"

* Mark said, "My new girl's so nice, she won't even whip cream and refuses to beat rugs."

His Mother said, "Does she like animals?"

He replied, "Well, I saw her pat a spider on its back."

* I believe that; if you help someone that is in trouble with no thought of reward, they'll never forget you ... every time they get in more trouble.

Hard Labor

* The other carpenters called my brother 'Blister' – only shows up after the work finished!

* Actually they think my brother might be something supernatural. He's almost always invisible, considers himself above everyone else and, if it's ever actually proven that he did something, they record it as a genuine miracle!

Painters

* A painter was desperate to get some work. When he was approached about repainting the interior of a local Church, he made a rash and very low bid. Most of the other painters had cut their usual margins because it was for a local Church anyway, so his profit margin was as wide as the head of a pin.

When he bought the paint for the job, he found it had gone up in price. The only way he could squeeze any profit from the job was to thin the paint right down.

But it did him no good. For weeks after that, he had nightmares about being chased by a giant paintbrush wearing a halo and shouting, "Repaint, you thinner! Repaint!"

* The painter asked Arthur's wife what color she wanted their bedroom. She pulled a hair from her own head and gave it to him. Then she said, "Mr Smith, just match that as close as you can, please."

When she got home, she found the walls were bright yellow and the skirting boards were black.

Plumbers

* Arthur phoned the plumber to query his bill.

He said, "I am a surgeon and I only get half this hourly rate."

The plumber replied, "That's right. So did I when I was a surgeon!"

Health

* Why are there always less people with bad coughs at the Doctor's surgery than the theatre?

* Dennis asked Alf, "What's a chiropractor?"

Alf said, "That's someone that gets paid to do what you or I would be slapped for!"

* Do astronauts get Athlete's Foot? Yes, but they call it Missile Toe.

* My Uncle is a hypochondriac. He always has a new disease for his Doctor to treat. The Doctor said, "Mr. Williams, there's no way to tell if you have that disease – it has no visible symptoms."

My Uncle replied, "That's right, Doctor – I must have it because I can't feel a thing."

Drinking

* Don't drink and drive. You might spill more than your drink!

* Smith appeared in front of the Judge after a night of celebration. The judge peered at him, then said, "I hope you realize that alcohol is responsible for your appearance here?!"

Smith said, "Please tell my wife, your honor – she keeps saying it's all my fault!"

Exercise

In this area, I'm a Benchley disciple – the late Robert Benchley, who said, “Whenever I feel the urge to exercise, I just lie down until it goes away!”

* Arnold is a relaxaddict. He and exercise were mutually exclusive until his Doctor found there was more red in his thermometer than in Arnold's veins.

* Actually, Arnold became very good at jogging. He's the only person I know that is so good, he can jog and eat 2 slices of pizza at the same time!

* But he said that he's giving up running to concentrate on sex. It's supposed to have the same anaerobic benefits and you don't have to keep buying expensive, special shoes.

Hospitals

* When I put on the hospital gown for my operation, it reminded me of our medical insurance – less coverage than I first thought. Just like the policy, there a thin, porous covering and, after that, there's just me.

The Hospital rang this morning to say that, If I don't pay the balance of my bill, they'll send round someone to put my appendix back in!

Smokers

* Smokers are real excited about the new trading stamps the cigarette companies are putting in the cartons. If they manage to get 50,000 stamps, they get 50% off the cost of their cancer operation.

* I've given up cigarettes. I did it when I heard the wooden Indian at the front of the store started coughing.

* Our Governments can't ban smoking. Smokers' taxes keep the rest of us solvent. Ah, smokers – they have hearts of gold ... and fingers the same color!

Insects

Ants

* Arthur said, "I admire the ant – they're always working and never taking holidays."

Fred said, "I don't think they're that focused. They're always going to picnics!"

Bees

* Why do Bees hum? Because they don't know the words.

Fleas

* Daryl was a great ladies man and always going to nightclubs. One night, the feature attraction was very unusual, a Flea Circus.

True to form, Daryl took home the whole chorus line!

Money

* Poverty is hereditary – we got it from our children!

* It's getting harder to keep up financially. Last week's regular prices were better than this week's specials!

* A new charity has already raised over half a million dollars. Their first research project is to find a disease of their own!

* Our Uncle says he's not tight with money, he'll give until it hurts! It's just that he's very sensitive to pain.

* I have enough money to last the rest of my life or until Thursday, whichever comes first.

* Simon was ecstatic that Dawn agreed to marry him but he started to worry when her face fell as she examined the engagement ring.

Simon said, "The jeweler said it was a flawless diamond!"

Dawn replied, "Darling, with a stone that small, there's no room for a flaw!"

* Our council debated for two hours how to raise more money. It's no surprise that they decided to increase the levy on local businesses for promoting the shopping area.

One brave, but very junior, councilor thought that was a bit rough but he realized that the others would vote for it because it didn't require much thought on their part.

So he said, "I move that we raise the levy from a tenth of turnover to a twentieth?"

And they passed it!

* Barry said, "Since I met Marsha, I can't eat ... I can't sleep!"

I said, "It must be love!"

"No," he replied, "I'm working 2 jobs so I can afford to keep seeing her!"

* He asked, "Would you still love me if I lost all my money?"

She said, "You haven't lost it, have you?"

"No." he replied.

"Of course I would, darling!" was the confident response.

Our Happy Home

* Charley was starting to dig the first garden bed when he noticed Sam, next door, setting up a trestle and some tins of paint.

Charley shouted, "Are you on holidays too, Sam?"

He replied, "Yes, I've got a week."

Charley said, "You're lucky, I've got 2 weeks holidays!"

* There's so many labor-saving appliances and multi-media entertainment systems in our homes now, some kids are thinking that the repair-man is their Dad because they see him more often!

* Martha said, "Charley, all this talk of war – I think we had better get a fall-out shelter."

Charley said, "I'm getting worried too but they're very expensive. Let's wait until someone advertises one second-hand."

* They asked 3 couples, "When do you believe human life actually begins?"

The first couple agreed that it was right at the moment of conception.

The next couple said, "We respect their view but we think it's when the baby is actually born."

The oldest couple had a different answer, "If we are very lucky, when our last child finally leaves home!"

* Fred asked his wife, "Is Mrs Gooze a gossip?"

His wife laughed, then said, "Yes, but she always tells everybody not to tell anybody the rubbish she tells them!"

Children

* The couple was having a night-cap and the wife said, "I'll go and check on Billy." She put down her drink and went to their young son's door.

She thought that she wouldn't put the light on in his room because she didn't want to wake him up. But he was awake.

She heard him say, "Daddy?"

"She said, "No Billy, it's Mummy. Why did you think I was Daddy?"

The kid said, "Because I can smell Daddy's perfume on you!"

* Greg's son is a teenage atheist. The kid doesn't believe the Beatles ever really existed!

* Ted took his small son fishing for the first time.

The kid pointed to something in the water and asked, "What's that, Dad?"

Ted said, "That's a jellyfish."

"Oh, what flavor?"

* We used to ask our parents to tuck us in. Today's kids just want us to plug them in – with their own computer, X-Box, stereo and wide screen television!

* I was a bright kid but only had one ambition; I wanted to marry the girl next door. She was the headline act at Stripperama!

* Young Delbert got home from a hard day in the third grade and asked his Mother, "Mum, what's Vice?"

She said, "Wait till your Dad gets home." Then she rang her husband at work.

"Delbert's asking *that* question! I want you to have *that* talk with him when you get home."

So, when Delbert's dad got home, he sat Delbert next to him on the couch, listened to the question and then gave him the whole story. He hoped it wasn't too much for the kid to understand, so he asked, "Delbert, what do you think of that?"

Delbert said, "I think that's cool."

Why?" asked his Dad.

"Because they've just made me Vice-Captain of our class and I can't wait to get there tomorrow!"

* jThe neighbor was telling my wife that her children share everything – measles, influenza and chicken-pox so far!

* My wife asked the Doctor could he please give our 4 year old a transfusion of tired blood so we could get some rest?

Cooking

* She didn't know much about cooking, but planned to surprise him when he came home from his first day back at work after the honeymoon. She made her version of something which his mother had told her was one of his favorite dishes – coconut pie.

His biggest problem wasn't that she used minced meat, but scooping it out of the coconut she cooked it in.

* Alfred was complaining about his wife's cooking again. He said, "She'd be lost without the freezer and the microwave! I don't understand why she can't do it properly and use a can opener like my dear Mother always did!"

* The couple that live on my right are regular church goers. He plays the organ at Church.

The wife is a great cook and she had her parents coming to dinner one Sunday. She set up a roast in their gas oven before they went to Church. The Priest was very punctual with his sermons and she could rely on being home again in time to get the meat from the oven and finish the preparation of the meal in plenty of time.

But there was a guest speaker that Sunday and she was afraid he'd never stop. In desperation, she scribbled a note for her husband and asked the verger to pass it to him.

Unfortunately, the Verger got it mixed up and gave the scrawled note to the speaker, who glanced at it, then quickly finished and sat down.

After the last parishioners left, the Priest asked the speaker why he'd stopped so quickly.

He said, "You would have too if you'd got this sort of note!"

He handed the lady's note to the Priest who read, "***GO HOME AND SHUT OFF THE GAS!***"

Marriage

* Bert really works at their marriage. He picked up his wife after she went to the Beauty Parlor last week. When she walked up to him, he said, "Excuse me, young lady. Do I know you?"

* My wife is really thoughtful. I told her that I wanted a power saw for my birthday. I was real happy that she got me just the model I wanted. Then I saw that she'd drawn an extra \$40 check on our account. She said she thought that we'd better bump up my medical cover. At least she didn't increase my life assurance!

* There was a Scots magician whose lovely assistant put on a little weight and couldn't fit in to his magic illusions. He was going to break off the engagement but couldn't get the ring off her finger so he had to marry her!

* Alice became engaged to Melvin, a guy with a colorful reputation as a ladies man.

As they sat on her couch one evening, Melvin said gently, "Alice, I really love you and I know you'll want me to live down my reputation."

Alice smiled and said, "Actually, I'm hoping you'll live up to it!"

* Allan heard that foreplay was very important for a happy sexual relationship, so he invited another couple on the honeymoon.

* Michael and his wife loved (that's the right word) going to wife-swapping parties – minimum dues and no don'ts at all.

* Michael had to stop going to wife-swapping parties when the Government passed that Truth in Lending Law!

* Charley said, "Congratulate me. I'm going to marry that young widow in French St."

Harry said, "I wouldn't want to be a widow's husband – always being compared to the first one."

Charley said, "It's much better than being the first husband though!"

* Harry's girlfriend cancelled her Membership of the nudist club 6 months before the wedding. She wanted to be married in white.

* Someone asked Anne, "What would you do if you married a rich man?"

She said, "Nothing – wouldn't it be marvelous!"

* They were on a tourist excursion when April was asked, "Do you like old ruins?"

She said, "Like them, I'm trying to get one to marry me!"

* I used to always have holes in my socks and buttons missing from my shirts. Then I got married. First thing my dear wife did was ... teach me to sew!

* Her Mother asked Sarah, "Did you show the girls at the office your engagement ring?"

Sarah replied, "Yes – unfortunately, two of them recognized it!"

Politics

As I've already said, this is a subject usually to be avoided. But here's a non-partisan line or two....

* "How do you define 'détente'?"

“That’s what the farmer has with the Turkey up till Thanksgiving!”

Religion

* The local Church thought they’d found the perfect Minister for them. He was the only candidate that was prepared to cut the grass and take out the garbage as well as his pastoral duties.

But he said, “No” because they weren’t prepared to pay him the same rate as other cleaners got.

* I believe God created the World in 6 days. I also believe it would have taken a lot longer if he took coffee breaks!

* Who has more faith – the average Member of your church or the gardener that buys those little packets of seed at the supermarket?

* The monks lined up before the Abbot every morning before breakfast. The Abbot would chant, “Good Morning.” in his very deep voice and all the monks would respond, “Good Morning.”

One novice monk didn’t appreciate the tradition so, one morning he sang, “Good evening.”

Immediately, the Abbot responded, “Someone chanted evening!”

For best effect, I suggest you sing that last line – if you dare!

* Last time there was a bad storm near here, one of my neighbors had to get on his roof to fix some tiles. He’s got a good head for heights but this time one foot slipped and he was quickly left hanging from the guttering by one hand.

He yelled out, "Is there anyone to help me!" but there was no-one outside because of the storm and his cries went unheard. He looked upwards and desperately yelled, "Can anyone up there help me?!"

Suddenly, a deep voice echoed down from the clouds, "Have faith and just let go!"

He thought for just a moment and then yelled back, "Is there anyone else up there that can help?!"

* Matthew was on a ship that hit a reef. He got away from it before it sank but was soon getting very tired. He saw a lifebelt bobbing in the distance and started to swim toward it but stopped. He thought, "I'm almost exhausted but mustn't worry. The Lord will provide for me."

Then a crowded lifeboat came near. One of the people in it said, "Come on, we'll find room for you!" But Matthew waved them away because he thought, "that little boat could capsize at any minute. Anyway, the Lord will provide for me."

An hour later, Matthew saw a helicopter overhead. They dropped an inflatable dinghy as close as they could and Matthew started to swim toward it. But the current started to move it away from him so Matthew stopped, still thinking, "The Lord will provide for me."

Matthew, sadly, drowned but made it to Heaven. He saw God and was bold enough to ask, "Why didn't you save me?"

God said, "Matthew, I sent a lifebelt, a boat and a helicopter. The rest was up to you."

* A man stood on the corner pushing pamphlets in to the unwilling hands of everyone that passed by. He shouted at Frank, "*Jesus Lives!*"

Frank stopped and asked, "Will they cancel our Easter holiday then?"

Restaurants

* The waiter spilled his soup all over Mervyn's trousers. He said he would rather have had a fly in his soup than soup

* The Head waiter asked the couple, "Would you like a table near the Band?"

The man said, "After last time here, we'd prefer one near a waiter!"

* As the waitress put his lunch in front of him, she said, "It looks like rain today."

"Yes," he replied. "But it still smells like coffee."

* The Waiter said, "Some patrons have found small pearls in our oyster stew!"

The diner said, "We'd be happy to find an Oyster!"

* The Maitre de said to the new waiter, "The people on that table are vegetarians. You know what a vegetarian is, don't you?"

The waiter said, "That's someone that treats sick animals."

The Maitre de said, "No! That's a veterinarian."

The waiter smiled and said, "You can't fool me. I know that's a retired soldier!"

Roasts

This type of function, that has been popularized by the professional television versions, are sometimes run by social or professional groups where a well-known and generally respected person agrees to be the butt of the night's jokes for the benefit of some charity. That's my excuse for including these lines.

* Here's to the little buzzing Bee
forever on patrol
A busy soul with no birth control
That's why we've got so many sons of Bees.

* Our Guest of Honor is always smiling. Either he's doesn't ever have anything to worry about or has nothing to worry with!

* Harry almost ran away from home when he was a child, but he couldn't get the refrigerator out through the front door.

Rules to Live By

Critic's Law

For every action there will be equal or greater criticism.

Eighty - Twenty Rule

80% of a business' profits come from 20% of their clients and 99% of the problems come from the other 80%.

The Law of Grants

If a research project is unlikely to succeed, don't accept more than 3 Government Grants.

Law of History

We may sometimes prevent History repeating itself but you can never stop Historians just repeating each other.

Law of Home Economics

If ever your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep will be your downfall.

John's Rule

Don't let facts spoil a great theory.

One Percent Rule

In 100% of competitions, a win by a margin of 1% is still a win.

In bureaucracies, 99% of the time, someone that contributed no more than 1% to a successful project will get 100% of the credit.

Politician's Rules

When in doubt, mumble.

When you're wrong, shout and thump the table.

Law of the Possible

Everything is possible for the man that doesn't have to do it.

Law of Projects

90% of a project will take 90% of the schedule and the last 10% will take another 90%

Law of Sausage

People that respect the Law and like sausages should never watch how either is made.

Law of Success

The most important thing is Sincerity. When you can fake that, you've got it made!

Timely Laws

A broken watch still gets the time right twice each day.

A man who has 2 watches can never be sure.

Science

- * If you want to understand Relativity, just think of those times when you needed to use the bathroom, then found your teenage daughter was in there and she said, "I'll only be a minute."
- * It was an Irishman that invented the toilet seat, but it's an Englishman that gets all the credit. And all he did was cut a hole in it!
- * Have you heard of the new silent alarm clock. Instead of having a loud buzzer, it sprays the odors of fresh brewed coffee and fresh-cooked eggs and bacon
- * I think we should stop spending money to research how old Planet Earth is and concentrate on stuff that will keep it around a bit longer!
- * If it wasn't for Thomas Edison inventing the electric light, I'd be working on my computer by candle-light!

Show Business

Actors

- * The Actor had a pretty girl bailed up at a party. He said, "That's enough about me. I'd rather we talk about you. What did you think of my latest movie?"
- * One starlet in Hollywood has improved her career by dating a few producers. Every time they make a move, she makes a movie!
- * Melvin said, "I'm an actor"

Jenny asked, "That's nice, but what do you do for a living?"

* The Stage Manager put him in the program after the trained monkey but he wouldn't go on. He didn't want to be mistaken for an encore!

* Anne said, "That new actress has done very well without a Press Agent"

Arnold said, "How? Does she use word of mouth to advertise?"

Anne replied, "I've heard it's more mouth to mouth!"

Musicians

* Jerry knew the other tenants didn't like him playing his drums but he had to practice because that's how he earned his living. One day, he met the custodian on the stairs and asked him, "Does my drumming worry you?"

The guy replied, "It did when the first tenant complained to me but after 2 weeks of it, I don't mind what they do to you!"

* An agent said, "I can't get any work for that piano player. He's the Van Gogh of the Music World – he's got no ear!"

* The World-famous violinist was the only survivor when his plane crashed in the African Jungle. He scrambled through the wreckage and found his violin, also un-harmed.

Then he started to walk along a track, hoping it would lead to a village. But he saw a ferocious lion stalking him.

In desperation, he pulled out his violin and, despite some trembling because of his situation, began to play beautiful music.

The monkeys stopped their chattering to listen, snakes stopped slithering (try saying that 3 times quickly) and even the birds stopped whistling – they all were enthralled by the music.

The World-famous violinist thought, “It’s true – music does soothe the savage beasts!”

Then the lion jumped on him and ate him.

One of the bigger monkeys (he was safely high in a tree) said, “Lion, why did you do that – the music was exquisite!!!”

The lion looked up and said, Eh ... speak up?!”

* The paper reported there was a riot at a Heavy Metal concert last night. I just want to know how they could tell?!

Speakers

The Master of Ceremonies turned to the Guest Speaker as he sat back down and said, “Thank you, Mr Jones. We have a spare 5 minutes left in our program. Could you help us out by telling us what the speech you just gave us was about?”

* The Master of Ceremonies said, “I’d rather hear our next presenter speak than eat. And I’ve heard him do both!”

* I asked one veteran speaker, “Why do you move around so much when you give your talks.”

He said, “I feel safer if I stay a moving target.”

Sport

Football

* Patrick didn't think his team was being treated fairly by the umpire. He thought he'd stopped his opponent getting a goal and the other player called over the umpire, claiming that the goal was legal.

Patrick asked, "Who's right?"

The umpire said, "We are."

* Mrs Schultz was telling everyone how well her son was doing on his college's football team.

Her neighbor asked, "What position does he play?"

Mrs Schultz said, "Some sort of back."

Her neighbor asked, "Quarterback?"

Mrs Schultz said proudly, "I remember, the Coach told me he was their biggest drawback!"

Golf

* The Golfer stumbled slowly to the Clubhouse. He said to his playing partner, "Sorry, that was my worst game ever!"

The other chap said, "Oh, I didn't realize you'd ever played before!"

* This was the duffer that shouted at his caddy after another bad round, "You must be the worst caddy in the World!"

The caddy said quietly, "Sir, I can't be – that would be an incredible co-incidence."

Skiing

* Skiing is fairly expensive way to get some exercise. Every year, it brings joy, happiness and greater well-being to thousands of people – Doctors, chiropractors, splint-makers!

Toasts

Keep these handy even if you don't have a need for them right now.

Travel

* I've always wanted to visit the Leaning Tower of Pisa but I'd imagine a lot of people might have trouble in the bathrooms there.

Transport

Cars

* When Alec was at college, he read lots of comics and built himself a copy of the BatMobile. Then his girlfriend got pregnant, so he had to sell it and get a 'BratMobile'!

* I've been saving since 2000 and this year, 2005, I'm going to pay the deposit on a discounted 2004 model which I'll own outright by 2010!

* Scientists, with the help of a 2 year, \$400,000 grant have confirmed that the loudest noise you will ever hear is the first rattle in your new car.

* Another scientist developed a new product that every motorist will want to buy, a windscreen wiper that destroys parking tickets.

* He complained to the salesman that sold him the used car, “You said it was only driven by a little old lady, but the ashtrays are full of cigar butts.”

The salesman had the perfect answer, “I told you the truth – there’s her picture.”

The little old lady was 59 year old ‘Dynamite Doris, Darling of the Demolition Derbies!’

Railways.

A **sleeper** is one that sleeps. A **sleeper** is also a railway carriage that is set up for people to sleep in. A **sleeper** can also be the wooden block under the railway tracks over which the train runs.

So, while **the sleeper** sleeps in **the sleeper**, **the sleeper** carries **the sleeper** over **the sleeper** under **the sleeper** until **the sleeper** that carries **the sleeper** jumps **the sleeper** and wakes up **the sleeper** by striking **the sleeper** under **the sleeper** and there no longer any **sleeper** for **the sleeper** who was sleeping in **the sleeper** on **the sleeper**.

Did that put you to sleep?

War of the Sexes

* The man stood in the middle of a great desert talking to himself. There was no woman for miles in any direction.

My question is, “Was he still wrong?”

* A male scientist issued this finding, “Women are born with a reduced sense of humor so they can love men without laughing at them.”

He vs She

* Morton realised the spark had gone from their marriage when he saw that the only pills in the medicine cabinet were a jumbo-sized box of aspirin.

* His lawyer asked Athol, "Why did your wife sue for divorce?"

He replied, "Because I tried to help her."

The lawyer said, "How was that?"

Athol moaned, "She said sex was becoming just like another household chore, so I offered to get a girl in twice a week to help out!"

* Larry had been a noted wolf before he got married and I don't think things changed much.

His wife was thrilled when he bought her 3 differently colored wigs for her birthday. But he told me that it was so she wouldn't get suspicious if she found different colored hair on his collars!

* Marilyn visited her new neighbors to welcome them to the town.

Anne said, "My husband's at work but please come in and have a drink and a chat."
Marilyn noticed there was a framed print of the Three Wise Monkeys on their wall. Anne said, "Yes, I bought that. I think it's very important to not gossip."

Marilyn said, "I agree but that means you wouldn't have much fun at our sewing circle!"

* Carol asked Debbie, "Do you like those men that are continually pawing you or the other kind?"

Debbie asked, "What other kind?"

* I asked Bert, Have you ever looked at another woman since you were married?"

He said, "I can honestly say no. After meeting my wife, I've gone off them entirely!"

* "I love your clinging evening gown." he said with a suggestive smile.

His wife shot back, "I don't, because it's been clinging to me for 3 years!"

* My niece is a lawyer. She's just written a book about alimony. She called it, "Bounty from the Mutiny".

* The neighbor told me that his mother in law is visiting them.

I asked, "How do you get on?"

He said, "I haven't spoken to her in three days."

"Why not?"

He answered, "I'm not supposed to interrupt her."

* As he staggered in their front door, he found that she had waited up for him.

She said, "I'm glad you finally realized that Home is the best place."

"Actually, my darling, it's the only one that's still open!"

* Bert asked Alfred, "What did your wife say when you got home late last night?"

Alfred said, Nothing."

Bert said, "That was nice of her."

Alfred replied, "Not really – it still took her two hours!"

* Sam asked Alfred, "Do you talk to your wife when you make love?"

Alfred said, "Sometimes, if she phones me."

* Rudolph and his wife lived in a small apartment in Moscow. They argued over everything. One evening, Rudolph looked out the window and said, "Sasha, it's raining."

She replied, "No Rudolph, it's snowing."

He looked at and said, "It's not snow. After 12 years in the Russian Weather Service, Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear!"

* When my boss got home last night, his wife said, "The cook quit today. She said you shouted at her on the phone."

He replied, "I apologized and told her the truth. I thought she was you!"

* Her husband said, "Let's go out and have some fun tonight?"

"Okay," she agreed, "but be sure to leave the light on in the hall if you get home first!"

* A couple ended the weekend with a blazing argument and neither would give ground. She went to the bathroom, then to bed.

She saw that he had pinned a note to her pillow and thought, "How sweet!" But then she read it. All it said was, "IMPORTANT! I've got to be at the office early tomorrow. Wake me at 7am."

When he woke in the morning, he saw that it was 10am and the sun was shining outside. He looked at his pillow and saw a note pinned there, "It's 7am WAKE UP!"

* Arthur's wife was very upset when he got home so he asked her why.

Jenny said, "I saw Mrs Crabthorpe in the Mall and she walked right past me. She must think she's better than me!"

Arthur said, "I've heard that she's a lying tart and never passed second grade. Darling, you **are** as good as she is!"

* He said to his wife, "These tv soaps that you watch all day are ridiculous. They're supposed to be just like us. Our arguments don't end with organ music!"

She said quietly, "Well, they haven't yet."

Writers

* The newspaper editor rang a farmer and said, "I'm ringing to check our cub reporter's story. Did you have 2,008 pigs stolen?"

The farmer replied, "Yeth."

The editor said, "Thank you."

When the story appeared in the paper, it said, "Two sows and eight pigs stolen."

* The brash and boring poet met a girl at a party and said, "My publisher said they will publish my complete works posthumously as a tribute."

She said, "That's wonderful. I can't wait for it to become available!"

* You've probably heard about the guy who bought a book, 'How to Hug', because he thought it was a sex book when it was really just part of a set of encyclopaedia – so I won't tell you that one.

I did something similar the other day – got really excited when I saw a new book from France, '100 Risque Stories'. I couldn't wait to get my money out and then get the book home.

Well, I was disappointed but how can I complain? They were children's fairy tales by a nice old priest called Father Risque!

* The writer asked a bookseller, "How is my autobiography doing?"

She replied, "Okay, "Then she pointed to a sour looking man who was just leaving the bookshop with a large parcel. "He bought twelve copies!"

The writer said, "Oh no! That's my ex-wife's lawyer!"

* "How is your son doing as a ghost writer?"

"He's very successful. He's now got two people doing his writing for him!"

* The Tax Inspector looked at the author and said, "I'm checking your last Tax return and I've got just one question – I thought you said that you don't write fiction?"

Using Humor to Heal

Some years ago, Norman Cousins was diagnosed with a serious debilitating illness and he, in consultation with his Doctor, used relaxation - assisted by watching many classic comedy films - as part of his response to the illness.

Norman Cousins stressed that humor did not beat his illness, but humor was a means that he used to improve the way he approached his life and it is a matter of record that this change of viewpoint helped significantly with his recovery.

His story was the subject of a book called, 'Anatomy of An Illness' which I recommend that you read.

Another place where humor was deliberately made part of a recuperative program was the hospital operated by Archibald McIndoe in England during the Second World War. This was where Members of the Royal Air Force that suffered major burns, as a result of being shot down, were treated.

The beginning of that War also marked the first breakthroughs in the treatment of serious trauma. Surgeons and the R.A.F. administration, among others, were starting to understand that attention to the psychological state of these patients was as important as treating the physical injuries – the trauma could be as deadly as the burn!

There's a BBC documentary called 'the Guinea Pig Club' about the successful program run by McIndoe (with the cooperation of the RAF administration) and it was also the subject of a wonderful book, 'The Reconstruction of Warriors' by Emily Mayhew that was published in September 2004.

Emily Mayhew, the author, is also the grand-daughter of one of the many young women that lived near the hospital and regularly visited the patients. McIndoe deliberately recruited the most attractive nurses that he could find (something that might be much harder to do in these politically correct days) and, yes, humor was seriously encouraged.

Most of the patients were severely disfigured and the enthusiastic support of the entire village, which became known as 'the village that never stared', was also a major factor in the success of the program.

This was as impressive to me as the courage of the patients themselves.

Since those successes, there has been a growing acceptance of the Power of Laughter.

I learnt that many amputees create and share jokes through a lady that lost part of one leg due to diabetes. She counseled hospital patients that were to have amputations for various medical reasons. Humor is an important part of her stock in trade. I have not included any examples here because much of the stuff she showed me was as dark as it was funny.

There are now many programs that use humor to assist many types of hospital patients through their recovery. This can be clowns visiting child patients and others or group "laughter therapy" sessions for adult patients.

Such programs can be useful, especially when the providers are competent professionals - whether clowns and presenters. Otherwise, most of the benefit is likely to disappear as soon as they leave the room.

You cannot force people to be funny – if they are uncomfortable and tense up, then that feeling is likely to transmit itself through the whole group.

Telling somebody that they are very funny when their joke or the way they presented it mis-fired is likely to make them repeat that effort – something which will not help them or the people they tell the story to.

But, if the leader maintains a fun atmosphere and everybody feels that they are among friends, the power of humor will help their healing.

Now, it's up to you. There is everything you need here to begin using humor to brighten your outlook on life and the lives of those around you.

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